



Governor Kim Reynolds
Lt. Governor Adam Gregg
San Wong, Director

ICSAA

Iowa Commission on the Status of African-Americans

Iowa Commission on the Status of African Americans
Quarterly Meeting
November 6, 2020
6:00 – 8:00 PM

Virtual Via Google Meets
Due to Coronavirus Pandemic (COVID 19)

Minutes

Call to Order

Meeting called to order at 6:03 p.m. by Ahmadu Baba-Singhri, chairperson

Welcome/Introductions

Present: Ahmadu Baba-Singhri, Monica Mead, Rosalind Peebles-Fox, Lynn Sutton

Staff: Kim Cheeks, Monica Stone

Absent: Kenneth Morris, San Wong, ex-officio

Visitors:

Lori Young – Just Voices

Harvey Harrison – Just Voices

Erick Nganyange, Mason City Human Rights Commission

Kevin Sanders, President - Iowa City Branch NAACP

Approve Minutes of Aug. 14, 2020

Fox motioned to approve the minutes as submitted, second by Sutton, approved unanimously.

Financial report

Monica Stone reported the budget for the Dept. of Human Rights (DHR) has not changed since the last meeting report. The DHR board met and approved the budget for the next fiscal year.

Public Comment

Moved further down on the agenda to accommodate one of the presenters.

Reports

None

Old Business

1. DHR Board Meeting update – Stone gave the status of the financial report earlier on the agenda.

2. Collaboration with other Black Organizations – retreat planned for commissioners only, couldn't get done due to open meeting law. Felt the commission could be more effective by working with other organizations. Baba spoke with Kevin Sanders – Iowa City NAACP president, who is here today. The commission will have to finalize a plan so that they may be able to work with others effectively.
3. Letter to Governor Reynolds – COVID 19 update – letter was sent to the governor about the handling of COVID 19 and the impact on the black community. As of this date the commission has not received a concrete response from the Governors' office. Baba will leave it to commissioners to decide the next step/approach to take; follow-up letter, or let it go. Sutton suggested, commission ask for a response on what was done, and what is the Governor's plan for the future. Baba motioned to send follow-up letter to the original letter dated May 19. Fox questioned, what are the specific asks from the governor. Baba responded; address concerns with the commission/black community, and verify the letter was received. Fox feels we need specific action, if she can't meet the commissions expectations, then can we meet with the COVID team. Monica Stone stated she would get the information, who is serving on the COVID team. She and Sonya Streit can meet with the leaders of the Public Health response team and ask if they can meet or respond to the commission. Fox requested a copy of the original letter. Cheeks will send the letter to commission members. Sutton added that Iowa has been a hotspot since the letter and it should be revised. Fox inquired if there will be a meeting to edit the letter in the next couple of weeks. Mead agreed, and feels there are other needs to be addressed. Commission will meet again in the next two weeks. Cheeks will send out possible meeting dates. Motion remained on the floor, decided by the commission to meet to resolve the issue.
4. Finalize speaker series discussion – Sioux City – Baba referred to Cheeks, she proposed since there are travel restrictions for state employees due to pandemic, and that we not put commissioners at risk, to develop both a virtual and written survey to engage Sioux City community. Mead, agreed as well, to hold a virtual session and then send a survey to the community about issues important to them. Cheeks will send potential dates to hold session.
5. Review ICSSA Commissioners' Strategic Planning Meeting – Baba, session focus was to use data to help commission plan programs, to best serve the community. He will leave up to commissioners to decide if they want to have another session or give additional feedback about the needs and concerns of the community. Discussion took place about data, juvenile justice update, and other issues. A clear decision was not made to hold another strategic session.

Public Comment

Presentations:

1. Dr. Andrea Wilson - Grand View University Professor, presented a talk about racism, institutional racism, white privilege, the definition of, and the struggles with it. She is the director of diversity, initiatives, and teaches topics such as types of racism; individual, interpersonal, institutional (built in policy), systemic (eg. banks, education, housing) and the various institutions working together to make it difficult for some to thrive. In addition, white privilege – societal advantages based solely on the color of their skin, avoidance of societal disadvantages, how it affects access to opportunities.
2. Lori Young and Harvey Harrison – Just Voices, presented last year at the community discussion about racially biased policing and they wanted to share some updates. The team members all care about racial justice, and all have ties to Iowa. They envision a society free of racial oppression, are a non-profit part of a movement, that started with racial profiling, and officially launched Sept. 2019. Wanted to provide a platform for the people to provide them power in a framework where dialogue and solutions begin. Updates: an anti-bias policing ordinance passed in Des Moines, joined with NAACP DSM & ACLU to form an alliance, didn't get all asks but included a ban on racial profiling, implicit bias and de-escalation training, and make data collection/disclosure on all traffic stops mandatory. Also developed www.justvoicesiowa.org, a website that houses data and stories about racial profiling, a resource page with lots of information, reading material, a quiz "Know Your Rights" when stopped by the police, the myths, and truths.

What can ICSAA do:

- champion/help Just Voices expand model statewide
- secure funding for a university-level research project to collect data and stories from other major cities in Iowa
- include data and findings on criminal justice for aa in Iowa in your annual report
- leverage our data and stories to inform, lobby, and influence lawmakers, who are clueless, to secure a statewide ban on racially-biased policing
- Use your networks and resources to help connect us to community and business leaders across the state who could engage their community to create a more just Iowa

Promote unbiased policing – recommendations:

- require and automate data collection on race from traffic stops
- analyze and study the resulting data, and provide annual reports on the findings
- adopt a statutory ban on disparate treatment in law enforcement activities and the delivery of police services
- ensure legislation stays alive

Contact information:

Email: info@justvoicesiowa.org

Harvey 515-277-9715

Lori 515-202-9710

3. Kevin Sanders – Coralville expected to vote on an unbiased policing ordinance, four cities in Johnson County have enacted unbiased policing ordinances to this date.

New Business

Election of Officer - Vice chairperson

Baba, vice chair position has been vacated by a former commissioner, Sutton volunteered to fill the position. Baba turned the process of election over to Cheeks. Cheeks, called for others who wanted to volunteer for the position, after hearing no others volunteer, closed the floor for vacancy. Mead motioned to accept Sutton's offer to fill the vice chair position, 2nd by Baba, approved by unanimous vote.

Sutton thanked all members for agreeing and accepting her offer to fill the vacant position, and is looking forward to serving for the betterment of Iowa communities.

Next Meeting

Cheeks will send dates:

1. Sioux City community discussion
2. Develop follow-up letter to Governor Reynolds for COVID-19 Pandemic concerns

Adjourn

Sutton motioned to adjourn, 2nd by Mead, agreed unanimously. Meeting adjourned at 7:59 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Kim Cheeks

Kim Cheeks
Recorder